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SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES

Letter dated 21 March 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the President of the Russian Federation, Boris N. Yeltsin, of 16 March 1996 (see annex) in connection with the adoption by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the decision on increasing the integration of the peoples that were united in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and rescinding the decision by the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of 12 December 1991.

I should be most grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 41 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) S. LAVROV
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations

* A/51/50.

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ANNEX

Statement by the President of the Russian Federation, Boris N. Yeltsin, of 16 March 1996

On 15 March 1996 the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation adopted a decision on increasing the integration of the peoples that were united in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and rescinding the decision by the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of 12 December 1991. The essential thrust of the document adopted is to cast doubt on the decision by the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR on the denunciation of the Treaty on the formation of the USSR. The lack of a legal basis for the decision adopted by the Duma and its direct contradiction of the Constitution of the Russian Federation are abundantly obvious.

Regardless of the underlying reason for the decision adopted, its sponsors would have done well to consider the consequences that it may have for the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This decision by the State Duma, just like the decision on the legal force of the USSR referendum of 17 March 1991 on the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, is in fact designed to create a political and legal deadlock in the Russian Federation.

The Agreement establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States (including the Protocol of 21 December 1991) declares that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality no longer exists. The decisions adopted by the Duma are incapable of resurrecting the Soviet Union and can only give rise to uncertainty with regard to the legal status of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, their adoption can be viewed as an attempt by the Duma to abolish our State system. They cast doubt on the legitimacy of State bodies, including the currently functioning State Duma, and call into question the possibility of holding presidential elections.

The Russian State, if one proceeds on the basis of the documents adopted, forgoes its succession to rights. The list of other possible consequences as well is considerable:

- Destruction of international and regional security mechanisms,
- The threat of the uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear weapons,
- An increase in international terrorism and regional conflicts.

The cover of the crafty argument for increasing the integration of the peoples of the CIS countries and the Duma's decisions in fact are having exactly the opposite effect:

- They are placing obstacles on the path to real integration,

- They are reviving nationalist extremist forces in the CIS countries and the Baltic region, and

- They are sharply aggravating the situation of our compatriots in those countries.

These actions can be defined only as betrayal of the interests of the Russian Federation.

For my part, I assure the citizens of the Russian Federation that my position remains unchanged. I firmly support all proposals to increase the integration of the peoples and States that were part of the USSR. However, I reject politically explosive and unlawful, one-sided decisions.

Integration is a voluntary matter. It must be brought about on the basis of maximum respect for partners, without pressure from any side and without unnecessary commotion or declarations. Only then will a firm, stable basis for uniting free States be established.

Work has been proceeding for several years now within the Commonwealth on the establishment of a single economic, social, technological, scientific, educational, cultural and information zone.

I guarantee Russian citizens, the peoples of the CIS countries and the world community that:

The Russian Federation is maintaining its status and adhering to all treaties concluded by it.

Integration within the Commonwealth will continue. Decisions constituting major advances in this regard can be expected as early as March.

As the guarantor of the Constitution, I shall not permit any attempt to undermine the foundations of Russian statehood and destabilize the situation in the country.